

They carry Bracknell's Cup hopes WATCH OUT WYCOMBE, SAY NEWTOWNERS

BRACKNELL Town are out to cause one of the biggest upsets in the amateur soccer calendar, when they entertain mighty Wycombe Wanderers in the semi-final of the Berks and Bucks Senior Cup at Larges Lane on Saturday (2.45 ko).

It's the biggest game at Bracknell this season and the club are hoping for a large turn out from local fans to see their own team take the underdogs role in this titanic battle.

The Larges Lane officials breathed a huge sigh of relief on Saturday, when they did not receive a letter from the Berks and Bucks FA. The letter they were hoping not to arrive concerned a possible suspension for midfielder man Jimmy Woodcock, one of the mainstays in the Bracknell team over the last few years.

It would have been a vicious blow for the Newtowners had Woodcock got a ban, but thankfully the decision has been held up.

New manager Dan Daly, who only took over the reigns of the club a couple of weeks ago, was putting his men through a final training session tonight (Thursday) after they had a friendly match at Guildford on Tuesday evening.

The Bracknell defence of goalkeeper John Alder, full backs Bobby Elderfield and Colin Hopkins and centre backs Iain MacPhee and John Donnachie practically picks itself. The midfield trio is almost certain to be Mick Dewick, Jimmy Woodcock and Alan Jeffries, but it is the forward line that Daly faces a problem.

Does he bring back top scorer John Squires, who is having a lean period at the present or does he persevere with young Tony Cullip? Experience or youth? That's the question that faces Daly.

In fact, he could select his front three from five players, Gordon Wilkinson, Charlie Gaffney, Tony Cullip, Terry Barnard or John Squires. All five have laid claims to a place over the season, but Daly's choice is likely to be influenced on Tuesday night's performance at Guildford.

Iain MacPhee will be hoping to lead his side to a final place on Easter Monday and Bracknell can only do this with plenty of home support.

Wycombe are sure to bring a good following with them, but it's up to the Bracknell crowd to outshout them and urge their side on to that final place.

How does manager Daly see his side's chances?

"Well, if we can keep them tight, then we are in with a chance, but if we let them get on top in the midfield, I don't think we will get through. It's going to be a lot of leg work for our players, in fact it will be a question of the fittest and we aim to make sure we're that," replied the Bracknell boss.

"An early goal would set us up with a good chance, but we know that they will come at us hard in the opening

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minutes. We are confident that we can soak up their pressure and, who knows, break away and grab a goal. I would certainly like to think so," added Daly.

The Newtowners secretary Den Goward sees the match as a David and Goliath tussle. "We certainly won't be like lambs going to the slaughter, that's for sure."

Wycombe have had, for them, a disappointing season. Champions of the Isthmian League for the past two seasons, they have no chance of regaining their title this year from champions-elect Hendon, who have opened up a huge lead at the top of the table.

Knocked out of the Amateur Cup in the early rounds, the Bucks side have only an interest in this competition.

Their first reaction on hearing the draw was "thank goodness we have not been drawn against Slough." Slough are the Wycombe side's bogey team and results never go in the Loakes Park favour.

Seemingly gone are the days, when the words Wycombe Wanderers sent shivers of fright through defences, but, and this is the main point, they must not be treated lightly. They still have a deadly forward line, capable of prizing open the tightest of defences and half chances are goal chances which sometimes go in.

Obvious dangers to the Bracknell defence are Larry Pritchard and veteran Tony Horsemann, but in the Wycombe team, goals come also from the so called defenders.

John Delaney is certainly the biggest name at Loakes Park. Once at Slough, Wycombe fans don't talk about their Bucks rivals, Delaney is a many capped England international. He is regarded by many as the best centre half in amateur soccer and has had several tempting offers to join a professional club, but turned them down in favour of remaining at Loakes Park.

Delaney, the Wanderers skipper, is dangerous near an opponents goal in the air and Bracknell will be keeping a careful eye on the Wycombe centre back at corners and set pieces.

Wycombe are sure to put out a full strength side and several current internationals will be parading before

the Larges Lane crowd, another incentive for the missing supporters to take a trip to the ground.

Wycombe, who hit a bad patch at the beginning of the season, but they recently recorded a fine 1-0 home win over Walton and Hershnam, a sign of their return to their form of old?

Saturday's game promises to be a thriller with both sides all out for the vacant final place against either Wokingham or Slough on Easter Monday.

The Bracknell side will have to survive early pressure, but if they can do this and possibly snatch a goal, then hold on by attacking rather than defending then they could pull off the big surprise, which everyone connected with the club is hoping for.

Whatever the outcome, it's sure to be a match to remember. Probable teams:

Bracknell: Alder; Elderfield, Hopkins, Donnachie, MacPhee (capt); Dewick, Woodcock, Jeffries, Gaffney, Squires, Cullip, Wilkinson, Barnard, Sub:

Wycombe: Maskell, Gambin, Delaney, Bullock; Williams, Birdseye, Hutchinson, Pritchard, Horsemann, Hollifield, Amos, Sub: Gane or Rundle.